



CAMBODIA

UPDATED ASSESSMENT OF R2P IMPLEMENTATION 2022



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The following Updated Assessment Annex provides an overview of Cambodia's efforts in implementing R2P as of 2022. For a full description of the methodology used in this study, see Part II of 'Implementing the Responsibility to Protect in the Asia Pacific: An Assessment of Progress and Challenges', available [here](#). For more information on R2P implementation in the Asia Pacific in 2022, see the updated assessment [here](#).

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Cambodia has declined sharply since the 2019 assessment, mostly due to decreasing domestic human rights protections. The country has been a trailblazer in the region for furthering atrocity prevention in the past. This has included being the first and only ASEAN member to nominate a national R2P Focal Point. It has progressed further than most in taking forward consideration of risk and resilience and developing an action plan for atrocity prevention. It was a founding member of the Global Action Against Mass Atrocity Crimes (GAAMAC) network, which since 2009 has initiated a series of regional and international conferences on atrocities prevention. It has also been (and remains) a decent contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations, including those with a protection of civilians mandate.

The Extraordinary Chambers of the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), established to prosecute atrocity crimes perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge, continues to be plagued with problems and controversies and Cambodia remains reticent to support initiatives such as veto restraint and the Kigali Principles. There is also a gap between the government's rhetoric and its actions in regional organizations. Whilst the Prime Minister and National Focal Point have committed Cambodia to lead initiatives for atrocity prevention within ASEAN, this has not translated into practice. Indeed, Cambodia has not only failed to initiate action within the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, but it has also failed to support initiatives proposed by others such as Indonesia and Malaysia. This record has so far continued with its current chairmanship of ASEAN and its response to violence in Myanmar, China, and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Cambodia has struggled to translate its international commitment to R2P into domestic change, and these related Indicators have seen the largest drop in scores. It has not yet established an independent human rights institution, and there has been further backtracking on human rights, the intimidation of opposition parties, the winding back of the rule of law, and restrictions placed on the media and civil society. New laws or amendments have raised questions about the ability of the media and civil society to freely participate in open dialogue on political matters and raised the prospect of more widespread political violence.

As it currently stands, Cambodia is in effect a one-party authoritarian State, with little chance of change in the near future.

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Assessment	Indicator
Very Strong	Appoint national R2P Focal Point
	Sign and ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and cooperate fully with the Court
Strong	Protection of populations from atrocity crimes
	Sign, ratify and implement relevant instruments of international law
	Participate in international peer review processes, including the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the UN Human Rights Council
Fair	Dealing with past atrocities
	Incorporate atrocity crime risks and dynamics into conflict analysis and/or development partnerships
	Cooperate fully with UN Human Rights mandate holders and those of relevant regional organisations
	Criminalise incitement to commit genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity
	Take measures to counter and prevent violent extremism
	Enact and implement laws protecting vulnerable groups, particularly in relation to sexual and gender-based violence
	Ensure the education system reflects the ethnic, national and cultural diversity of society, and sets examples of inclusiveness
	Prevent nationals committing atrocity crimes overseas
	Participate in international, regional and national discussions on the further advancement of R2P
	Contribute to United Nations peacekeeping operations (especially those with a protection of civilians mandate)
	Develop the capacities needed to support civilian protection, including through the training of military and civilian personnel for peacekeeping
	Support UN Security Council veto restraint on issues relating to atrocity prevention
Weak	Reduction of atrocity crime risks
	Establish domestic mechanisms to hold the government accountable for upholding its responsibility to protect
	Ensure equal access to justice
	Protect individuals and groups fleeing atrocity crimes and their risk, in accordance with International Refugee Law
	Conduct a national assessment of risk and resilience
	Leverage existing mechanisms and institutions (including regional and sub-regional organisations) to encourage States to fulfil their responsibility to protect
	Encourage and assist States to fulfil their R2P in situations of emerging and ongoing crisis, such as good offices and preventive diplomacy
	Strengthen regional and international networks for atrocity crime prevention
	Support atrocity prevention through development and assistance partnerships
Very Weak	Establish and maintain National Human Rights Institutions in accordance with the Paris Principles

	Ensure domestic promotion and protection of human rights, focusing on the elimination of discrimination
	Cultivate and protect an active, diverse and robust civil society
	Ensure a legitimate, effective and civilian controlled security sector
	Strengthen the role and capacity of regional organisations
	Support the development and work of regional human rights and other preventive capacities
	Support the early warning and capacity building efforts of the UN Office on Genocide Prevention and R2P
	Support the strengthening of the UN's capacity for atrocity prevention, including through the UN Human Rights system
	Support preventive actions on atrocity crimes
	Support the Kigali Principles

Cambodia 2022 Score: 35

Cambodia 2019 Score: 41

Difference: - 6 

Cambodia's past suffering under the genocidal Khmer Rouge (1975-1979) has made it a natural leader in the region to promote R2P. However, this stellar record has been marred by a decline in democratic processes and significant challenges relating to human rights, political accountability, the rule of law, and closing the gap between the government's rhetoric and reality.

Thematic Area	Indicator	Assessment	Notes
Basic Compliance	Protection of populations from atrocity crimes.	Strong Decrease	Cambodia has been aware, perhaps more than any other Asia Pacific country, of the risks and effects of atrocity crimes in the past. However, recent actions by the Cambodian government under Prime Minister Hun Sen regarding land grabbing ¹ and in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, ² have seen violations of Cambodians' human rights that may constitute crimes against humanity.
	Reduction of atrocity crime risks.	Weak Decrease	The erosion of human rights in Cambodia, increasing political oppression and lack of accountability in government processes means the likelihood of atrocity crimes occurring in Cambodia has increased.
	Dealing with past atrocities.	Fair Decrease	The genocide and atrocities committed by the Khmer Rouge regime in the 1970s in Cambodia are widely known in the country. However, Hun Sen's efforts to politicise the genocide and affect the workings of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) in prosecuting perpetrators, means proper recognition of past atrocities may decrease. Genocide education will likely remain a responsibility of NGOs more than the government, ³ given the current regime's backsliding on human rights.
Policy Mechanisms	Appoint national R2P Focal Point.	Very Strong Unchanged	Cambodia retains its status as the first ASEAN member to appoint a national R2P Focal Point. ⁴
	Incorporate atrocity crime risks and dynamics into conflict analysis and/or development partnerships.	Fair Unchanged	Cambodia retains generally strong support for atrocity prevention and the R2P norm, due in no small part to work by prominent civil society organisations in raising awareness and promoting accountability. ⁵ However, no evidence could be found since 2019 of Cambodia incorporating atrocity risks into official policies.
	Establish domestic mechanisms to hold the government accountable for upholding its responsibility to protect.	Weak Unchanged	While Cambodia remains committed to R2P, domestic mechanisms to hold the government accountable for the norm are non-existent. The continued erosion of political pluralism and human rights within the country (see subsequent Indicators) decreases the chances of the ruling party being held accountable for any potential atrocity crimes.
International Human Rights Obligations	Sign, ratify and implement relevant instruments of international law.	Strong Unchanged	Cambodia retains its ratification status for eleven of the twelve international human rights laws most

¹ Flyne, Gerald, and Phoung Vantha, 2021. "What other country would do this to its people?" Cambodian land grab victims seeks int-l justice'. *Mongabay*, 1 April. Available at: <https://news.mongabay.com/2021/04/what-other-country-would-do-this-to-its-people-cambodian-land-grab-victims-seek-intl-justice/>.

² Travouillon, Katrin, 2021. *COVID-19 worsens Cambodia's political oppression*, <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2021/01/05/covid-19-worsens-cambodias-political-oppression/>.

³ The Documentation Center of Cambodia enacts training programs, forums and provides educational materials across Cambodia to raise awareness and educate Cambodians on the crimes of the Khmer Rouge regime. Documentation Center of Cambodia, 2019. *Genocide Research and Education*, <http://dccam.org/genocide-education/>.

⁴ Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (GCR2P), 2020. *Members of the Global Network of R2P Focal Points*, <https://www.globalr2p.org/resources/members-of-the-global-network-of-r2p-focal-points/>.

⁵ Two of the most prominent are the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace (<https://cicp.org.kh/>) and the Documentation Center of Cambodia (<http://dccam.org/home>). Both of these organisations liaise with Cambodian governmental and civil society stakeholders, as well as regional partners, to help Cambodia heal and learn from the divisions of the Cambodian genocide.

	Sign and ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and cooperate fully with the Court.	Very Strong Unchanged	relevant to R2P. It remains a signatory to the <i>Arms Trade Treaty</i> (ATT) but has yet to fully ratify it. ⁶ Cambodia continues to adhere to the <i>Rome Statute</i> since its ratification in 2002. ⁷ There is currently pressure from international rights groups on the ICC to investigate the Cambodian government's policies of land grabbing that may have led to the commission of crimes against humanity. ⁸ A judgement is pending on whether the ICC will investigate such a case, and whether Cambodia will cooperate with the Court's investigation.
	Establish and maintain National Human Rights Institutions in accordance with the Paris Principles.	Very Weak Unchanged	Cambodia has yet to establish a national and independent human rights institution. The Cambodian Human Rights Committee is drafting legislation that will see the establishment of such an institution within the country. Yet, the proposition has drawn criticism from human rights groups doubting the independence and effectiveness of any organisation, given the current state of human rights in Cambodia in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. ⁹
	Ensure domestic promotion and protection of human rights, focusing on the elimination of discrimination.	Very Weak Decrease	The protection of human rights within Cambodia has lessened within the last two years, mostly due to the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the continued repression of civil society. Since the dissolution of the opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP) by the government in 2017, Cambodia is effectively a one-party State, and many former CNRP members and other political opponents have been subject to harassment and intimidation. This includes other activists and human rights defenders. ¹⁰ In 2020 during the pandemic, the government, furthering the cause of public security, introduced new measures that severely curtailed rights of freedom of expression, association and assembly. <i>The Law on the Management of the Nation in a State of Emergency</i> has been criticised by rights group of disproportionately infringing on the rights of Cambodia's people, as well as lacking an effective

⁶ United Nations Treaty Collection, 2021. 8. *Arms Trade Treaty*, https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=XXVI-8&chapter=26&clang=en.

⁷ International Criminal Court (ICC), 2003. *Cambodia*, https://asp.icc-cpi.int/en_menus/asp/states%20parties/asian%20states/Pages/cambodia.aspx.

⁸ Patrick Alley, 2021. *Policy and Practice: Does the International Criminal Court have the will to prosecute environmental crimes?*, <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/blog/policy-and-practice-does-international-criminal-court-have-will-prosecute-environmental-crimes/>; International Federation for Human Rights (fidh), 2021. *Cambodia: International Criminal Court Prosecutor urged to prosecute land grabbing crimes*, <https://www.fidh.org/en/region/asia/cambodia/cambodia-international-criminal-court-prosecutor-urged-to-prosecute>.

⁹ International Federation of Journalists, 2021. *Cambodia: Concerns rise over governments establishment of National Human Rights Institution*, <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/cambodia-concerns-rise-over-governments-establishment-of-national-human-rights-institution.html>; Dara, Voun, 2021. 'CHRC to hold 60 meetings on national rights commission'. *The Phnom Penh Post*, 12 July. Available at: <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national-politics/chrc-hold-60-meetings-national-rights-commission>; Sochan, Ry, 'CHRC accuses NGOs of injustice'. *Khmer Times*, 8 October. Available at: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50771025/chrc-accuses-ngos-of-injustice/>.

¹⁰ Amnesty International, 2021. *Cambodia 2020*, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/asia-and-the-pacific/south-east-asia-and-the-pacific/cambodia/report-cambodia/>. See also: Bopha, Phorn, 2021. 'Cambodia's democratic dream in shreds 30 years after Paris accord'. *Aljazeera*, 23 October. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/23/cambodias-democratic-dream-in-shreds-30-years-after-paris-accord>.

oversight mechanism to prevent abuse.¹¹ This new situation in Cambodia “...has cultivated an atmosphere of fear and intimidation that severely undermines the ability [of civil society] to engage in the dialogue required to foster a healthy democracy.”¹²

Furthermore, the UN’s Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia, Vitit Muntarbhorn, released his first report in August 2021, saying in a statement the country was “backsliding” from democracy and seeing a shrinking of civic space.¹³

Discrimination against certain minority groups persists in Cambodia. The most recent report of the committee on the International Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, to which Cambodia is a State party, lamented gaps in Cambodian law that allowed continued racial discrimination. Specifically, there remained no specific anti-discrimination legislation and hate speech continued to be levelled towards minorities, particularly against ethnic Vietnamese.¹⁴ Women, people with disabilities and those belonging to the LGBTIQ+ community continued to face widespread societal discrimination. Women in particular were targeted by Hun Sen for not proscribing to tradition by wearing ‘revealing’ clothing. In February 2020 Ven Rachana, who sold clothing online via Facebook, was arrested and sentenced to six months imprisonment on charges of pornography.¹⁵

Participate in international peer review processes, including the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the UN Human Rights Council.

Strong
Increase

Cambodia undertook its last UPR in 2019. Of the recommendations it received at this time, it supported all but 25 of them, which were noted, and rejected none of them.¹⁶ Those recommendations which it noted included extending a standing invitation to UN special procedures, revising laws on political parties, and repealing laws the impinge on civil liberties.¹⁷ It will undertake its next UPR in January 2024.

Cambodia has now since caught up on two of its overdue reports, with only two remaining (CAT and CRPD).¹⁸

¹¹ U.S Department of State, 2021. *2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Cambodia*, ‘Section 2. Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:’, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/cambodia/>.

¹² Cambodian Center for Human Rights, 2020. *The Human Rights Situation in Cambodia in 2020*, https://cchrcambodia.org/index_old.php?url=our_work/our_work.php&id=3.

¹³ United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (UNOHCHR), 2021. *Cambodia: Stop backsliding and expand freedom – UN expert*, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27614&LangID=E>. See also: United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC), Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia, 3 August 2021, A/HRC/48/79.

¹⁴ United Nations, Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), Concluding observations on the combined fourteenth to seventeenth reports of Cambodia, 30 January 2020, CERD/C/KHM/CO/14-17, paras. 9-13.

¹⁵ U.S Department of State, 2021. *2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Cambodia*, ‘Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons’; Amnesty International, 2021. *Cambodia 2020*, ‘Women’s rights’. See also: Human Rights Watch (HRW), 2020. *Joint Statement: Draft Law on Public Order Violates Women’s Rights*, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/08/27/joint-statement-draft-law-public-order-violates-womens-rights>.

¹⁶ UPR-Info, 2019. *Responses to Recommendations: Cambodia*, https://www.upr-info.org/sites/default/files/document/cambodia/session_32_-_january_2019/2rps_cambodia.pdf.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ UNOHCHR, n.d. *Late and non-reporting States*, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/LateReporting.aspx.

	Cooperate fully with UN Human Rights mandate holders and those of relevant regional organisations.	Fair Unchanged	Cambodia has still not opened a standing invitation to UN mandate holders. However, the majority of country visits by mandate holders in the past have been completed. ¹⁹
	Ensure equal access to justice.	Weak Decrease	<p>While Cambodia's constitution grants citizens equal status before the law and ensures judicial independence, in practice the opposite is true, and circumstances have declined in the past few years.</p> <p>As mentioned in the previous Indicator, over the past several years many actors, including the UN, regional bodies, NGOs and other States have drawn attention and expressed concern at the deterioration of human rights in Cambodia, including issues regarding justice. The judicial system has been deemed to be partisan and corrupt,²⁰ especially since the dissolution of the main opposition party and continued legal harassment of opposition members and civil society actors.²¹</p> <p>Investigations into arbitrary disappearances and politically motivated killings are not investigated or, if some procedures are undertaken, are deemed a sham.²² As such there is a pervasive culture of impunity in both the judicial system and security forces, compounded by government control of the judicial branch. "Judicial officials, up to and including the chief of the Supreme Court, often simultaneously held positions in the ruling party, and observers alleged only those with ties to the ruling Cambodia People's Party (CPP) or the executive received judicial appointments."²³</p> <p>This corruption flows into issues of arrest procedures, treatment of detainees, and conditions of prisons, where widespread violations and abuses have been noted.²⁴ This includes acts of physical and psychological abuse of detainees, which could potentially fulfill the criteria for torture.²⁵</p>
	Criminalise incitement to commit genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.	Fair Unchanged	<p>Several Articles in Cambodia's <i>Criminal Code</i> continue to criminalise genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.</p> <p>Recently, there is evidence of political interference in cases tried by the ECCC, established to judge former members of the Khmer Rouge for committing genocide. Case 004/02 against Ao An, a regional deputy commander of the Khmer Rouge,</p>

¹⁹ UNOHCHR, n.d. *View Country visits of Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council since 1998*, <https://spinternet.ohchr.org/ViewCountryVisits.aspx?visitType=all&country=KHM&Lang=en>.

²⁰ Amann-Lasnier, Victoria and Nicole Fleury, 2019. *UPDATE: Overview of the Cambodian History, Governance and Legal Sources*, '2.5 Judicial Branch', '3. Recent Political/Electoral Developments', https://www.nyulawglobal.org/globalex/Cambodia1.html#_Judicial_Branch; Freedom House, 2021. *Freedom in the World 2020: Cambodia*, 'Rule of Law', <https://freedomhouse.org/country/cambodia/freedom-world/2020#CL>.

²¹ fidh, 2021. *Cambodia human rights crisis: The UN Human Rights Council should act now*, <https://www.fidh.org/en/region/asia/cambodia/cambodia-human-rights-crisis-the-un-human-rights-council-should-act>; HRW, 2020. *Cambodia: Events of 2020*, 'Arrest and Harassment of Opposition Members and Supporters', <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/cambodia#2e3fc7>.

²² Amann-Lasnier, Victoria and Nicole Fleury, 2019. *UPDATE: Overview of the Cambodian History, Governance and Legal Sources*, '2.5 Judicial Branch'

²³ U.S Department of State, 2021. *2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Cambodia*, 'E. Denial of Fair Public Trial'.

²⁴ Ibid., 'Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:'; Amnesty International, 2021. *Cambodia: 2020*, 'Right to health'.

²⁵ U.S Department of State, 2021. *2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Cambodia*, 'C. Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment'.

Take measures to counter and prevent violent extremism.

Fair
Unchanged

has been deadlocked as the Cambodian judges maintain the case be dismissed, while the international judges insist the case go to trial.²⁶ Cambodia continues to take measures to prevent terrorism and violent extremism. In a submission to the UN Office of Legal Affairs, Cambodia's Permanent Mission to the UN detailed efforts by the country in conducting training courses, exercises and sharing information with organisations within Cambodia and the region.²⁷ This included an acknowledgement of violent extremist ideology spread by ISIS, and how gender-inclusive policies can impact counter-terror efforts.²⁸

Cambodia has also carried out joint counter-terrorism exercises with China,²⁹ and has vowed, together with ASEAN members, to strengthen law enforcement cooperation to combat transnational crime.³⁰

Enact and implement laws protecting vulnerable groups, particularly in relation to sexual and gender-based violence.

Fair
Decrease

The current decline of human rights within Cambodia greatly affects those who are already discriminated against, including women and ethnic minorities. Recent statements by the government and proposed new laws regarding dress codes are signs of erosion of women's rights in Cambodia,³¹ which retains high levels of gender inequality despite implementation of legislation and national action plans in the 2000s.³²

Incidents of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) are common, and more have recently been uncovered that occurred during the Khmer Rouge regime. The retention of the *Chbab Srey*, a traditional and unofficial 'code of conduct' for women, perceives women to be inferior to men, and is still taught in Cambodian schools today.³³

These entrenched gender norms mean cases of SGBV are rarely followed up by the police and judicial system. Laws and definitions of rape and domestic violence are vague and many observers in Cambodia believe the government and Cambodian

²⁶ Open Society Justice Initiative, 2020. *Recent Developments at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia: Deadlock Continues in Ao An Case*, <https://www.justiceinitiative.org/uploads/54dc3814-d6c0-49ea-976c-1d4be896418f/briefing-eccc-recent-developments-20200109.pdf>.

²⁷ Kingdom of Cambodia Permanent Mission to the United Nations, 2020. *An Update on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism on Implementation of Declaration in General Assembly UNSCR*, https://www.un.org/en/ga/sixth/75/int_terrorism/cambodia_e.pdf.

²⁸ It should be noted that some of these gender-sensitive measures reference characteristics of Cambodian women, including their 'morality' and 'modesty'. These measures should be examined in light of the current regime's attack on human rights and women's rights, as mentioned in the next Indicator, and other previous Indicators.

²⁹ Xinhua, 2020. 'Cambodia, China launch joint military exercise on anti-terrorism, humanitarian rescue'. *Xinhuanet*, 15 March. Available at: http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-03/15/c_138880705.htm.

³⁰ Chavez, Chito, 2021. 'ASEAN leaders vow stronger ties vs post-pandemic transnational crime'. *Manila Bulletin*, 14 October. Available at: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/10/14/asean-leaders-vow-stronger-ties-vs-post-pandemic-transnational-crime/>.

³¹ Amnesty International, 2021. *Cambodia: 2020*, 'Women's rights'; Menghun, Kaing and Sievlan Len, 2020. 'Opinion: Cambodia is trying to take away women's right to freely choose what to wear'. *The Washington Post*, 19 August. Available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/08/19/cambodia-is-trying-to-take-away-womens-right-freely-choose-what-wear/>.

³² International Women's Development Agency, n.d. *Cambodia*, <https://iwda.org.au/cambodia/>; UN Women, n.d. *UN Women Cambodia*, <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/cambodia>.

³³ Menghun, Kaing, and Sievlan Len, 2020. 'Opinion: Cambodia is trying to take away women's right to freely choose what to wear'; Szablewska, Natalia and Olga Jurasz, 2018. 'Sexual and gender-based violence: the case for transformative justice in Cambodia'. *Global Change, Peace and Security*, vol. 31, no. 3, (2019).

	Protect individuals and groups fleeing atrocity crimes and their risk, in accordance with International Refugee Law.	Weak Unchanged	<p>society at large do not view domestic violence as a criminal offence.³⁴</p> <p>While Cambodia remains a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, their approach to asylum seekers and refugees remains lacklustre and the processes in place are not equally accessible.³⁵</p> <p>There is no evidence to suggest Cambodia's attitude towards Montagnard refugees from Vietnam, which the government has returned to Vietnam in the past, has changed for the better. Hun Sen has previously denied the existence of Montagnards within Cambodia's borders.³⁶</p>
Domestic Implementation	Conduct a national assessment of risk and resilience.	Weak Unchanged	There has been no official assessment of atrocity crime risk and resilience in Cambodia. However, the country has continued to engage with atrocity prevention through dialogues with regional partners to share information and lessons learned on atrocity risks. ³⁷
	Cultivate and protect an active, diverse and robust civil society.	Very Weak Decrease	<p>Since COVID-19, the Cambodian government has used the pandemic as a means to stifle civil society and political dissent amongst its population. This includes impinging on the rights of association, assembly, movement and expression, as well as extensive surveillance powers limiting internet freedoms.³⁸</p> <p>Reporters Without Borders ranks Cambodia as 144/180 and this ranking has been declining since 2017. Censorship and self-censorship are widespread, and many of the major media outlets in the country are linked to Hun Sen.³⁹ Freedom House, in its annual rankings of political and civil freedoms, considers Cambodia to be 'Not Free', with a score of only 25/100.⁴⁰</p>
	Ensure a legitimate, effective and civilian controlled security sector.	Very Weak Decrease	While the Cambodian government retains control over the military and police forces, cultures of corruption and impunity means that any reported abuses were largely ignored. With the increased crackdown on political opposition and civic space, security forces are "...generally perceived as an armed wing of the ruling party." ⁴¹
	Ensure the education system reflects the ethnic, national and cultural diversity of society, and sets examples of inclusiveness.	Fair Unchanged	Education in Cambodia was moved from face-to-face to online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which brought challenges due to a

³⁴ U.S Department of State, 2021. *2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Cambodia*, 'Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons'.

³⁵ Ibid., 'Section 2. Respect for Civil Liberties, Including: F. Protection of Refugees'.

³⁶ Savi, Khorn, 2019. 'Calls for protection of refugees'. *The Phnom Penh Post*, 11 July. Available at: <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/calls-protection-refugees>.

³⁷ Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (APR2P), 2021. *Spotlight on R2P: The Responsibility to Protect at 15: Challenges and Future Prospects*, https://r2pasiapacific.org/files/6470/spotlight_apr2021_R2P_at_15.pdf; APR2P, 2021. *Spotlight on R2P: The 45th Anniversary of Khmer Rouge Victory: What Lessons Could Cambodia Share?*, https://r2pasiapacific.org/files/6465/spotlight_apr2021_45_khmerrouge_victory.pdf.

³⁸ HRW, 2020. HRW, 2020. *Cambodia: Events of 2020*, 'Draconian New Laws'. See also: fidh, 2020. *Cambodia: Down, But Not Out – Repression of human rights defenders in Cambodia*, https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/rapport-cambodia2020_final.pdf; U.S Department of State, 2021. *2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Cambodia*, 'Section 2. Respect for Civil Liberties, Including: A. Freedom of Expression, Including for the Press'.

³⁹ Reporters Without Borders, 2021. *Cambodia*, <https://rsf.org/en/cambodia>.

⁴⁰ Freedom House, 2021. *Freedom in the World 2020: Cambodia*.

⁴¹ U.S Department of State, 2021. *2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Cambodia*, 'Executive Summary'.

			<p>widespread lack of technology infrastructure to support the change.⁴²</p> <p>However, Cambodia has made some progress in providing inclusive education, particularly for students with disabilities.⁴³ They have also established the Multilingual Education Action Plan 2019-2023, to develop the knowledge and skills of indigenous students through education in their mother-tongue.⁴⁴ Indigenous students have previously been marginalised in the predominantly Khmer-based curriculum.</p>
Bilateral and Multilateral Relations	Prevent nationals committing atrocity crimes overseas.	Fair Unchanged	There was no evidence that Cambodian nationals had committed atrocity crimes overseas. The country remains a signatory (and has fully ratified) the <i>Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court</i> .
	<p>Participate in international, regional, and national discussions on the further advancement of R2P.</p> <p>Leverage existing mechanisms and institutions (including regional and sub-regional organisations) to encourage States to fulfil their responsibility to protect.</p>	<p>Fair Unchanged</p> <p>Weak Unchanged</p>	<p>Cambodia has not engaged with any official UN processes when discussing R2P. However, as previously mentioned, they have engaged with APR2P and other regional bodies in discussing how R2P can be better implemented.⁴⁵</p> <p>Cambodia has shown little enthusiasm for encouraging States to engage with R2P at the General Assembly. As the following list shows, it was absent from the voting process for most resolutions regarding the norm.</p> <p>UN General Assembly Resolutions:⁴⁶</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2018: Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions A/RES/73/172: yes. • 2018: Situation of human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea A/RES/73/180: adopted without vote. • 2018: Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic A/RES/73/182: did not vote. • 2019: Situation of human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea A/RES/74/166: adopted without vote. • 2019: Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic A/RES/74/169: did not vote. • 2020: Situation of human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea A/RES/75/190: adopted without vote. • 2020: Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions A/RES/75/189: yes. • 2020: Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic A/RES/75/193: did not vote.

⁴² Piseth, Neak, 2021. *Inclusive Education in Cambodia amid COVID-19 Pandemic*, <https://cambodianess.com/article/inclusive-education-in-cambodia-amid-covid-19-pandemic>.

⁴³ Kibesaki, Aya and Yuliya Makarova, 2020. *Building a Stronger Partnership to Improve Education in Cambodia*, ‘Cambodia’s progress in promoting inclusive education’, <https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/building-stronger-partnership-improve-education-cambodia>.

⁴⁴ Kingdom of Cambodia Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, 2019. *Multilingual Education Action Plan 2019-2023*, <https://education-profiles.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/MEAP%202019-2023.pdf>.

⁴⁵ See Note 37.

⁴⁶ GCR2P, 2021. *UN General Assembly Resolutions Referencing R2P*, <https://www.globalr2p.org/resources/un-general-assembly-resolutions-referencing-r2p-2/>. (Voting records for each resolution were accessed using the UN’s Digital Library: General Assembly of the United Nations, n.d. *Voting Records*, <https://www.un.org/en/ga/documents/voting.asp>.)

Encourage and assist States to fulfil their R2P in situations of emerging and ongoing crisis, such as good offices and preventive diplomacy.	Weak Unchanged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2021: Promoting a culture of peace and tolerance to safeguard religious sites A/RES/75/258: adopted without vote. 2021: The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity A/RES/75/277: did not vote. <p>Cambodia has donated medical supplies to countries throughout Southeast Asia to help in containing the COVID-19 pandemic.⁴⁷ This includes Myanmar, yet there is no mention of the 1 February coup or of encouraging Myanmar to protect its citizens from atrocity crimes at the hands of the Tatmadaw. Cambodia has been ambivalent on its stance towards violence in Myanmar, including the coup and the ongoing genocide against the Rohingya, labelling any unrest as a domestic affair without the need for intervention.⁴⁸</p> <p>No other information could be found of Cambodia assisting States in crisis in a way related to R2P.</p>
Strengthen regional and international networks for atrocity crime prevention.	Weak Decrease	No specific information could be found on Cambodia using networks for atrocity prevention and furthering R2P. However, Cambodia will take over ASEAN chairmanship from Brunei in 2022, with the theme of “ASEAN A.C.T.: Addressing Challenges Together”. ⁴⁹ The country will have to deal with the atrocities in Myanmar as well as other geopolitical issues affecting ASEAN member States. At the time of writing, Cambodia’s stance on these issues is ambiguous, with little optimism for the country’s chairmanship to produce any meaningful results. ⁵⁰
Strengthen the role and capacity of regional organisations.	Very Weak Unchanged	Cambodia’s chairmanship of ASEAN has met with little resolution and progress on the issues plaguing the region. While Cambodia has criticised Myanmar’s failure to adhere to the Five Point Consensus and particularly its execution of activists, ⁵¹ ASEAN’s reach remains stymied in mutual consensus and non-intervention, resulting in no end to the violence within Myanmar. Hun Sen’s unilateral visit to the country to effect change, which was perceived as legitimising the military junta, has done much less than what the Cambodian

⁴⁷ Kunthear, Mom, 2021. ‘Kingdom delivers assistance to Covid-stricken Myanmar’. *The Phnom Penh Post*, 19 August. Available at: <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/kingdom-delivers-assistance-covid-stricken-myanmar>.

⁴⁸ Niseiy, Sao Phal, 2017. ‘Cambodia’s Prime Minister Is Wrong About Myanmar’s Rohingya Issue’. *The Diplomat*, 9 February. Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2017/02/cambodias-prime-minister-is-wrong-about-myanmars-rohingya-issue/>.

⁴⁹ Kingdom of Cambodia Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation, 2022. *Cambodia’s Chairmanship*, <https://www.mfaic.gov.kh/Page/2021-04-01-Cambodia-s-Chairmanship>.

⁵⁰ For more information, see: Radio Free Asia Khmer Service, 2021. *New ASEAN chair Cambodia urged to maintain bloc’s firm stance on Myanmar*, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/asean-10292021194903.html>; Suy, Heimkhemra, 2021. ‘In 2022, Cambodia Faces Challenging Turn at ASEAN’s Helm’. *The Diplomat*, 10 June. Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2021/06/in-2022-cambodia-faces-challenging-turn-at-aseans-helm/>; Dunst, Charles, 2021. ‘What to Expect of Cambodia as ASEAN Chair’. *Center for Strategic & International Studies*, 4 November. Available at: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/what-expect-cambodia-asean-chair>.

⁵¹ Strangio, Sebastian, 2022. ‘ASEAN Envoy Warns Myanmar Junta Against Further Prisoner Executions’. *The Diplomat*, 8 August. Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2022/08/asean-envoy-warns-myanmar-junta-against-further-prisoner-executions/>; Strangio, Sebastian, 2022. ‘ASEAN Chair Condemns “Highly Reprehensible” Myanmar Executions’. *The Diplomat*, 26 July. Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2022/07/asean-chair-condemns-highly-reprehensible-myanmar-executions/>; Reuters, 2022. ‘ASEAN chair warns of Myanmar peace plan rethink if executions continue’. *Reuters*, 4 August. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/asean-rethink-peace-plan-if-myanmar-conducts-more-executions-cambodia-2022-08-03/>.

			government was hoping. ⁵² While responsibility for that diplomatic failure rests more with Myanmar than Cambodia, Cambodia's efforts have done little to further atrocity prevention within the region.
	Support the development and work of regional human rights and other preventive capacities.	Very Weak Unchanged	Cambodia does not support the development of human rights domestically, and therefore does not support their development in a regional or international context.
	Support atrocity prevention through development and assistance partnerships.	Weak Decrease	Cambodia maintains development partnerships with other countries and external actors to develop their capacities in sectors that support, although are not directly related to, atrocity prevention. ⁵³
			UNOHCHR maintains its oldest field presence in Cambodia and continues to promote and protect human rights in the country. A recent evaluation of the Office in Cambodia made note of the recent erosion of human rights in the country and its adverse effect on its work. ⁵⁴
United Nations, prevention, Peacekeeping, and assistance	Support the early warning and capacity building efforts of the UN Office on Genocide Prevention and R2P.	Very Weak Unchanged	There remains little information on Cambodia's support for the Office and its work.
	Support the strengthening of the UN's capacity for atrocity prevention, including through the UN Human Rights system.	Very Weak Unchanged	Cambodia continues to resist calls by UN human rights bodies to better protect human rights due to its heavy-handed response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to a recent report by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet criticising Cambodian actions, the government deemed the report "...based on false claims and it was a compilation of selectivity and bigotry." ⁵⁵
	Support preventive actions on atrocity crimes.	Very Weak Unchanged	Cambodia does not support preventive actions on atrocity crimes. Examining its stance towards Myanmar and its voting record in the General Assembly as examples, it sees situations of atrocity crimes as 'internal affairs' and does little to support prevention or participate in any meaningful way.
	Contribute to United Nations peacekeeping operations (especially those with a protection of civilians mandate).	Fair Unchanged	Cambodia retains a relatively small but active peacekeeping presence and has done so for a number of years. The country remains an enthusiastic contributor of peacekeepers, taking pride in the roles they play and how many women peacekeepers are included on their deployments. ⁵⁶ They currently have 764 personnel deployed over five missions, three of which (MINUSCA,

⁵² Hunt, Luke, 2022. 'Hun Sen Apologizes as Myanmar Gamble Backfires Over Sean Turnell'. *The Diplomat*, 9 February. Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2022/02/hun-sen-apologizes-as-myanmar-gamble-backfires-over-sean-turnell/>.

⁵³ For example: European Commission, n.d. *International Partnerships: Cambodia*, https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/where-we-work/cambodia_en.

⁵⁴ UNOHCHR, 2020. *Evaluation of the Cambodia Country Programme 2017 – 2020: Final Report*, https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/AboutUs/Evaluation/Evaluation_Cambodia_Country_Programme_2017-2020_August2020.pdf.

⁵⁵ UN Human Rights Council, 2021. *Human Rights Council Hears Presentations by the High Commissioner on Cambodia, Georgia, Yemen and the Philippines and Holds General Debate on Technical Assistance and Capacity Building*, <https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/human-rights-council-hears-presentations-high-commissioner-cambodia-georgia-yemen-and>.

⁵⁶ Chakrya, Kouth Sophak, 2021. 'Cambodian peacekeepers set for mission in Lebanon'. *The Phnom Penh Post*, 1 February. Available at: <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/cambodian-peacekeepers-set-mission-lebanon-0>; Soy, Ratha, 2021. *The young Cambodian peacekeeper inspiring change: Paving the road to lasting peace amidst the pandemic*, <https://cambodia.un.org/en/128883-young-cambodian-peacekeeper-inspiring-change-paving-road-lasting-peace-amidst-pandemic>; Hing, Vandamet, 2020. 'Peacebuilding and Development Implications of Cambodia's Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding Operation'. *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, vol. 15, no. 1, 111-116.

	Develop the capacities needed to support civilian protection, including through the training of military and civilian personnel for peacekeeping.	Fair Unchanged	MINUSMA and UNMISS) have a protection of civilians mandate. ⁵⁷ Cambodia's training for peacekeepers occurs at the National Center for Peacekeeping Forces, Mine, and Explosive Remnants of War Clearance (NPMEC). Training for a specific mission can take between six months and one year. Cambodian peacekeepers also receive training from development partners, including Australia, China, Japan, France, the US, and India. ⁵⁸
	Support the Kigali Principles.	Very Weak Unchanged	The extent to which atrocity crime risks and prevention strategies are incorporated into this training is unknown. Cambodia remains unsupportive of The Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians, despite its enthusiasm for peacekeeping.
	Support UN Security Council veto restraint on issues relating to atrocity prevention.	Fair Unchanged	Cambodia has yet to become a signatory of the Code of Conduct regarding UN Security Council action on atrocity crimes. ⁵⁹ It remains a signatory to the French/Mexican initiative on veto restraint. ⁶⁰

⁵⁷ UN Peacekeeping, 2021. *Troop and Police Contributors*, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors>. (Cambodia is selected from the drop-down box).

⁵⁸ Hing, Vandamet, 2020. 'Peacebuilding and Development Implications of Cambodia's Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding Operation', p. 114.

⁵⁹ GCR2P, 2019. *List of Signatories to the ACT Code of Conduct*, <https://www.globalr2p.org/resources/list-of-signatories-to-the-act-code-of-conduct/>.

⁶⁰ GCR2P, 2020. *List of Supporters of the Political Declaration on the Suspension of Veto*, <https://www.globalr2p.org/resources/list-of-supporters-of-the-political-declaration-on-suspension-of-veto/>.